

00822

1971/04/28



Department of State

HAND
TELEGRAM

SECRET

Z P 282314Z APR 71 ZFF6
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON FLASH 0000
RUFNCR/USDEL FRANCE IMMEDIATE 0000
INFO RUDTOR/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0000
BT
SECRET STATE 073348

Control 10674Q
April 28, 1971
7:14 p.m.
SITUATION ROOM
WHITE HOUSE
29

NODIS TOSEC 81

LONDON FOR THE SECRETARY

PARIS MEETINGS

SUBJECT: POW REPATRIATION/INTERMENT OFFER

REF: A. STATE 72095 B. SAIGON 6456

1. PLEASE TELL PRES. THIEU WE APPRECIATE HIS PROMPT CONCURRENCE FOR OUR MAKING POW REPATRIATION/INTERMENT OFFER, WITH FIGURES, AT APRIL 29 PLENARY.

2. FIGURES SUPPLIED BY MACV ARE SOMEWHAT LOWER THAN WE EXPECTED. WE STRONGLY HOPE THAT FIGURES WILL TOTAL TO 1700 OR MORE, TO EXCEED NUMBER OF US PW/MIA'S IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. IF NECESSARY LONG-HELD DURATION COULD BE REDUCED TO 3-1/2 YEARS, WHICH IS LONGEST ANY US POW WAS HELD BEFORE IN OUR HISTORY (IN WORLD WAR II). ASSUME SAIGON WILL DO ALL IT CAN TO PROVIDE REVISED FIGURES TO USEL IN TIME FOR THURSDAY MEETING. IF REVISED FIGURES NOT AVAILABLE IN TIME, USEL SHOULD USE FIGURES PER REF B.

3. FOLLOWING ARE POINTS FOR USEL TO DRAW ON IN MAKING THIS PRESENTATION:

A. OUR SIDE HAS REPEATEDLY MADE CLEAR ITS READINESS TO RESOLVE THE ENTIRE POW QUESTION ON A HUMANE BASIS. PRES. NIXON IN HIS OCTOBER 7, 1970 PEACE INITIATIVE CALLED FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ALL POW'S ON BOTH SIDES. IF YOUR SIDE HAD AGREED TO THIS PROPOSAL WHEN IT WAS MADE THE ENTIRE POW QUESTION COULD BE RESOLVED BY NOW. ALL THE POW'S COULD HAVE BEEN RELEASED AND REUNITED WITH THEIR FAMILIES.

B. AS A FIRST STEP OUR SIDE PROPOSED THE RELEASE OF ALL NORTH VIETNAMESE POW'S IN SOUTH VIETNAM, IN RETURN FOR THE RELEASE OF ALL US AND ALLIED PRISONERS IN INDOCHINA, AND

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By

Ju MIRA Date 3-9-80

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-2- STATE 073348, APRIL 28, 1971

ALL SOUTH VIETNAMESE PRISONERS HELD OUTSIDE SVN. WE REGRET YOUR NEGATIVE RESPONSE ALSO TO THIS PROPOSAL.

C. OUR SIDE ALSO PROPOSED THAT ALL SICK AND WOUNDED PRISONERS OF WAR WHO WISH TO RETURN HOME BE REPATRIATED AT ONCE. DESPITE YOUR REFUSAL TO AGREE TO HUMANE PROCEDURES FOR SUCH REPATRIATIONS, WE HAVE MANAGED TO ENABLE SOME POW'S TO RETURN TO NORTH VIETNAM.

D. WE HAVE ALSO PROPOSED THAT LONG HELD PRISONERS OF WAR, AS WELL AS SICK AND WOUNDED, BE INTERNED IN A NEUTRAL COUNTRY. THIS HUMANE ACTION IS SPECIFICALLY ENVISAGED BY THE GENEVA POW CONVENTION OF 1949 AND IS HONORED BY INTERNATIONAL LAW AND TRADITION.

E. TODAY WE WISH TO BE EVEN MORE SPECIFIC. LET US HERE TODAY DISCUSS CONCRETE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REPATRIATION OF SICK AND WOUNDED POW'S WHO WISH TO RETURN HOME. LET US TALK ABOUT SPECIFIC ARRANGEMENTS TO INTERN SICK AND WOUNDED AND LONG HELD POW'S IN A NEUTRAL COUNTRY.

F. WE HAVE CAREFULLY CHECKED THE RECORDS OF POW'S HELD BY OUR SIDE. TODAY WE CAN STATE THAT THERE ARE 570 (OR OTHER NUMBER) NORTH VIETNAMESE SICK AND WOUNDED POW'S IN SOUTH VIETNAM ELIGIBLE FOR REPATRIATION TO NORTH VIETNAM. WE CALL ON YOUR SIDE, HERE TODAY, TO AGREE TO SAFE, HUMANE MEANS OF REPATRIATION FOR THESE PRISONERS. THESE MEN CAN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY AT ONCE TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES AND FAMILIES IN NORTH VIETNAM, PROVIDED ONLY THAT YOU REMOVE THE OBSTACLES YOU HAVE PLACED IN THE WAY OF THEIR SAFE RETURN. THERE IS NO REASON WHY YOU CANNOT GIVE YOUR ANSWER TODAY.

G. IN ADDITION, WE CAN STATE THAT THERE ARE 940 (OR LARGER NUMBER) NVN POW'S HELD IN SOUTH VIETNAM OVER FOUR YEARS (OR 3-1/2 YEARS), WHOM WE ARE READY TO INTERN IN A NEUTRAL COUNTRY. SICK AND WOUNDED POW'S COULD ALSO GO TO A NEUTRAL COUNTRY IF THEY WISH. WE CALL ON YOUR SIDE, HERE TODAY, TO PROPOSE A NEUTRAL COUNTRY ON WHICH WE COULD AGREE FOR THE INTERNMENT OF THESE PRISONERS.

H. OUR SIDE IS PREPARED IMMEDIATELY TO CONCLUDE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUCH NEUTRAL INTERNMENT, A PROCEDURE SPECIFICALLY ENCOURAGED BY THE GENEVA POW CONVENTION.

I. THESE PROPOSALS TAKEN TOGETHER HAVE A SIMPLE PURPOSE. THEY WOULD GIVE OVER 1500 (HOPE THIS CAN BE OVER 1700) NVN POW'S NOW HELD IN SOUTH VIETNAM THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEAVE THE POW CAMPS TO GO HOME OR TO A NEUTRAL COUNTRY. THIS WOULD BE A

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-3- STATE 073348, APRIL 28, 1971

HUMANE SOLUTION TO THE PLIGHT OF THESE MEN. IT WOULD NOT REQUIRE THEM TO AWAIT THE RESOLUTION OF OTHER ASPECTS OF THE CONFLICT. IT IS UNILATERAL. WE CALL ON YOU TO ACCEPT IT.

J. AT THE SAME TIME, WE CALL ON YOU AGAIN TO AGREE TO SIMILAR ARRANGEMENTS FOR OUR MEN HELD BY YOUR FORCES. WE KNOW THERE ARE SICK AND WOUNDED. WE KNOW THERE ARE MANY HELD MORE THAN FOUR (3-1/2) YEARS. THESE MEN TOO SHOULD HAVE THE CHANCE TO RETURN HOME, OR TO BE INTERNED IN A NEUTRAL COUNTRY. SUCH ACTION ON YOUR PART WOULD BE A WELCOME WAY TO REFUTE THE CHARGE THAT YOU HOLD OUR MEN AS HOSTAGES. YOUR SILENCE ON THIS WOULD SERVE FURTHER TO CONFIRM IT.

4. THESE POINTS TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THIEU'S CONCERN ABOUT SAFE MEANS FOR DIRECT REPATRIATION, AND INVOLUNTARY REPATRIATION, PER REF B. AT SAME TIME THEY ARE INTENDED TO PUT RESPONSIBILITY SQUARELY ON NVN FOR NON-FULFILLMENT OF REPATRIATION/INTERNMENT OFFERS.

5. WE PLAN TO SUPPORT THIS PROPOSAL, AS WELL AS IMPARTIAL INSPECTION PROPOSAL, BY STATEMENTS HERE. FYI, PRESIDENT HAS SCHEDULED PRESS CONFERENCE FOR EVENING OF APRIL 29 AND WE ANTICIPATE HE WILL COMMENT ON THEM PERSONALLY. END FYI. WE HOPE AMBASSADOR BRUCE WILL HIGHLIGHT THESE PROPOSALS IN COMMENTS TO PRESS BEFORE AND AFTER PLENARY MEETING, AND THAT LEDOGAR AND GVN PRESS BRIEFER WILL DO SAME.

BT

DRAFTED BY: U/PW: FASIEVERTS
CLEARANCES: DOD/ISA - DR. SHIELDS
S/S - MR. CURRAN
WHITE HOUSE - GENERAL HAIG
APPROVED BY: WM. H. SULLIVAN

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